

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

THE DISEASES OF THE CHEST. By VINCENT HARRIS, M.D., F.R.C.P.
Student's Series. London, J. & A Churchill. 1888.

This little book is very carefully written and well got up. Of course the attempt to condense so extensive a subject in so small a volume has rendered it unavoidable that some points should have been somewhat lightly treated of. For instance, the causes of hæmoptysis are merely stated, and its treatment, which is of such anxious moment to the medical attendant, we think ought to have been more elaborate, the action and probable uses of the different drugs employed being discussed. We should have liked to have had Dr. Harris' own opinion as to the treatment which he considers it best to adopt. In the first part of the work he very rightly gives up some space to a careful account of the anatomy and physiology of his subject. We cannot quite agree with all he says in the treatment of empyema. "It is best to do the operation under antiseptic precautions." For the word *best* we should like to substitute *imperative*. No one with any experience of empyemata can doubt the difference in results between those cases which are treated and kept antiseptic from beginning to end. Instead of fixing the tube with silk lines, a broad flange will be found to be much more effective. He favors washing out the cavity with a solution of carbolic acid, which, except in some septic cases, we believe to be totally unnecessary. We should like to point out that carbolized tow is not antiseptic, and therefore, except in cases that are septic, Lister's dressings, wood-wool and Alembroth wool are the most suitable. A second opening is rarely necessary. With regard to operations in the treatment of bronchiectasis Dr. Harris is certainly too hopeful. How many cases has he seen on the post-mortem table which could in any way have been benefitted by incision and drainage? After some experience both in operations and post-mortem cases we are very doubtful if it can be of any use except in an extremely small number of cases. The disease is hardly ever limited to one cavity, the exact position of the cavity is very difficult to determine and other cavities may remain un-

detected by even the most experienced auscultators. We therefore cannot agree with him when he says that "yet in others the treatment may be said to have been highly beneficial." He quotes Dr. Theodore Williams who had six cases operated on with three deaths. Only one of these could be said to be successful. (Was it a localized empyema?) Not a very encouraging table surely! With regard to the infectiousness of phthisis he puts the question clearly and fairly, and we entirely agree with him that there is as yet no reliable evidence to show that the healthy can be infected from the sick. The following sentence considerably astonished us: "The fact that the majority of those who breathe the air, which has been proved to be *very full* of the bacilli in chest hospitals, etc." The italics are our own. Are there any really reliable observations to show that the bacillus does exist in the air? Even certain observers who have stated their presence admit that they are in extremely small numbers—certainly not that the air is "very full of them." It would be interesting to have Dr. Harris' authority for such a statement. We consider that it is the duty of a reviewer to challenge statements which he believes to be unsupported by any facts, as they are apt to be quoted to mislead. He concludes with diseases of the heart and aorta, and being limited to space has certainly picked out the most salient points for a beginner to notice. On the whole we believe that the work will be very useful to a beginner; and although we have questioned one or two statements, still for the most part it is accurately and fairly written.

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SELECT METHODS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF NITROUS OXIDE AND ETHER. By F. HEWITT, M.A., M.D., Lecturer on Anæsthetics at the London Hospital, etc. London: Balliere, Tindall & Cox, 1888, pp. 48.

The appearance of this little book is one of many indications that the study of the administration of anæsthetics is receiving at length more of the attention which it deserves, both as regards the instruction of students in anæsthetic methods and the general operations of surgery.

In less than 50 pages Dr. Hewitt gives clear and succinct directions for the administration of ether by Clover's inhaler, of nitrous oxide by the usual method, and of combinations of the two anæsthetics, either by administering "gas" to facilitate etherization, or employing a small amount of ether to prolong the narcosis of nitrous oxide. This latter